



The Federal Diary

U.S. Employees Organize New Antiwar Society

By Jerry Kluttz

A new antiwar civil rights organization, **Federal Employees for a Democratic Society** has emerged from the loosely organized Federal Employees Petition Against the War in Vietnam.

Its first public meeting will be held next Tuesday noon at the Sylvan Theater to mourn the loss of all persons killed in the Vietnam war, whether Americans, South Vietnamese, Viet Cong. Half a dozen ministers representing various faiths will speak.

The Society bases its opposition to the war on moral grounds and is encouraging employees to be "moral people" by speaking out against the conflict.

Federal workers are being told they have both the legal and the moral right to oppose the war, if that is their feeling. The legal right, sponsors say, was given them in the Code of Ethics for Government Service, which Congress approved in July, 1958. They point to this significant sentence in the Code:

"Any person in Government shall put loyalty to highest moral principles and to country above any person, party or Government department."

In effect, sponsors argue, this section of the Code guarantees Federal employees' rights to public expression of their feelings based on moral grounds.

It is an interesting point, and a point challenged by Federal officials.

When the petition against the war was being circulated

among Federal workers some months ago, employees whose work is related to the war in such agencies as the State and Defense Departments, the Agency for International Development and the like were cautioned not to sign it.

Officials argued that it would be a conflict of interest to oppose the war on one hand and to be involved with agencies making war policies and carrying them out on the other. It was gently suggested that those employees resign who are unable conscientiously to perform their official duties.

The peace-petition drive was led by **Mike Ambrose** who has since left his post in the **Civil Service Commission** to join **Community Projects, Inc.**, which is financed with anti-poverty funds.

The Society (which, incidentally, has no connection with the left-wing **Students for a Democratic Society**) originated with a group of young HEW employees who had been involved in the peace petition. Units are forming in the **Labor Department**, **CSC**, **NLRB** and other agencies.